UNITED
NATIONS

EP

Governing Council
of the United Nations
Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GC.20/10
17 December 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Twentieth session
Nairobi, 1-5 February 1999
Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*

POLICY ISSUES: COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Role of women in environment and development

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with Governing Council decision 19/7 of 7 February 1997, describes the action taken by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to implement the recommendations of that decision.

Suggested action by the Governing Council

The Governing Council may wish to:

1. Recall General Assembly resolution 50/203 of 22 December 1995, relating to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the national and international levels;

2. Recall its decisions 17/4 of 21 May 1993, 18/6 of 26 May 1995 and 19/7 of 7 February 1997 on the United Nations Environment Programme and the role of women in environment and development;

3. Take note of, the report of the Executive Director on the role of women in environment and development and the progress towards fulfilment of the commitment made by UNEP to meet the global priorities for the advancement of women;

---

* UNEP/GC.20/1.

K9800144 211298

/...

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

4. Welcome the Executive Director's decision to refocus the institutional arrangements for gender in UNEP by hiring a Professional staff member to undertake the actions related to the role of women in environment and development;

5. Request the Executive Director to continue efforts to fulfil the 10 commitments made by UNEP at the Fourth World Conference on Women as its contribution to meet the global priorities for the advancement of women by the year 2000;

6. Request the Executive Director to strengthen efforts to assist Governments to empower women to participate in the decision-making process on environmental matters and to provide them with information on the environment;

7. Request the Executive Director to extend the network of gender focal points to cover not only all Governments, in particular those of the developing countries and countries with economies in transition, but also relevant global non-governmental organizations.

1. In response to paragraph 5 of decision 19/7, requesting UNEP to improve the collection, dissemination and use of gender-disaggregated data related to women and the environment to ensure the integration of gender considerations in the development and implementation of its policies and programmes, the Executive Director has undertaken several actions. These include:

(a) Sustaining efforts to attain the targets set by the United Nations for the representation of women in Professional posts and posts at the senior policy-making levels, as set forth in the table annexed to the present report;

(b) Using the guidelines developed for the integration of gender into UNEP activities, including the design, monitoring and evaluation of programme and projects, resource mobilization strategy, the processing dissemination of information, training measures, the conduct of meetings, hiring procedures and selection panels;

(c) Assigning a gender focal point, at the senior level, to advise the Executive Director on the implementation of gender policies throughout the organization.

2. The Executive Director continues to address the request and, to that end is refocusing the institutional arrangements for gender in UNEP by hiring a Professional staff member at the P-4 level for the specific purpose of undertaking the actions related to the role of women in environment and development.

3. At the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, UNEP articulated two long-term goals for enhancing the status of women vis-à-vis their environment. First, women must become legitimate partners in environmental management. Second, the particular wisdom of women must be incorporated in environmental and developmental decision-making. Based on these goals, UNEP undertook to meet 10 specific commitments, as its contribution to meeting the global priorities for the advancement of women by the year 2000. Its efforts in meeting those commitments may be summarized as follows:

(a) In response to its first commitment to incorporate women's concerns into UNEP policy, programmes and projects, UNEP published, in December 1997, its Manual on Project Formulation, Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation, which includes a chapter on gender sensitivity guidelines, to be used in project development, implementation and management. Although UNEP projects for 1998 had already been screened and approved prior to the distribution of the Manual, projects for 1999 will be developed and implemented using the gender sensitivity guidelines;

(b) With regard to the second commitment on adjusting its recruitment policies, UNEP has continued to maintain its efforts to attain the targets set by the United Nations for women in professional and senior policy-making level posts. In addition, the gender focal point forms part of the Programmes's Appointment and Promotion Board and the women's roster and annual statistical reports are being maintained to ensure gender equity in personnel practices;

(c) UNEP is implementing its third commitment by asking managers to indicate the manner in which they will implement gender issues in programme planning and recruitment practices. Managers will continue to be held responsible by the Executive Director for fulfilment of this commitment;

(d) The fourth commitment made at the World Conference on Women advocates that gender concerns be reflected in the implementation of environmental conventions. All conventions brokered by UNEP promote an opportunity for women to participate in their implementation and development;

(e) Regarding the fifth commitment on the education of women, UNEP has been able to take the first steps in reaching out to women's groups and working with non-governmental organizations, as well as with other United Nations agencies, to promote training programmes for women's participation in public policies and programmes through its various outreach activities;

(f) In response to the sixth commitment, to cater to the needs of women in armed conflicts which take place over land and resources, UNEP has taken the lead on environmental issues in an inter-agency group comprising various United Nations agencies. In addition, UNEP provided comments to the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women on the Inter-Agency Gender Mission to Afghanistan, indicating areas of omission for future consideration and highlighting a number of the environmental problems specifically affecting the female population of Afghanistan;

(g) To implement its seventh commitment on women's right to manage and own land and make decisions on land use, UNEP in assisting countries to develop their institutional arrangements to implement environmental management. Women's groups are included in these institutional arrangements, either as advisory or decision-making bodies;

(h) With regard to the eighth commitment, UNEP is reinforcing the control of hazardous chemicals posing a threat when exported to developing from industrialized countries by catalysing international action to protect human health and the environment through measures which will reduce or eliminate emissions and discharges of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), including the development of an international legally binding instrument on POPs;

(i) With reference to its ninth commitment, UNEP is ensuring that advances take place in guaranteeing human rights for women, so they may fully contribute to the solution of environmental problems by cooperating with all United Nations agencies through the United Nations system-wide medium-term plan for the follow up to the Beijing World Conference on Women;

(j) As a response to the tenth commitment, which requires UNEP to ensure that women's special skills acquired as caretakers of nature are recognized, the Convention on Biological Diversity has developed a project to promote the collection and use of women's traditional understanding of native flora and fauna. In addition the Desertification Programme Activity Centre initiated the following activities:

(i) Ruvuma rural women-based integrated project in the United Republic of Tanzania, which has led to training in the construction and use of fuel-saving stoves as well as afforestation in several tree species, especially indigenous ones; and

(ii) Workshop held from 29 September to 3 October 1997 in N'Djamena, on the role of women in natural resource management in the Sahel, which served to raise the awareness of women of their role in natural resource management.

4. UNEP will continue to report on the implementation of its commitments made since the Fourth World Conference on Women which will continue to be reflected in the report for the mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001.

5. UNEP has developed as part of its programme for the 1998-1999 and 2000-2001 bienniums, a project activity on gender. The project aims to foster an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes of UNEP, as well as to increase the understanding of the role of gender in environmental planning and management. The activities of the project include:

(a) Dissemination of gender-sensitive guidelines for environmental projects;

(b) Production and dissemination of three national gender and environment success stories in critical areas;

(c) Development of a network of governmental focal points in gender and environment for the exchange of information and expertise; and

(d) Provision of information to decision makers and relevant non-governmental organizations on the role of gender in environmental planning and management.

6. As requested in paragraph 8 of decision 19/7, the Executive Director submitted to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, on 18 February 1997, the following documents for onward transmission to the Commission on the Status of Women, at its session from 10 to 21 March 1997, and to the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its fifth session from 7 to 25 April 1997:

(a) Report of the Executive Director to the Governing Council at its nineteenth session on the policy framework document Gender and the Environment: A UNEP Perspective;

(b) Policy statement by the Executive Director of 5 November 1996 entitled: "Guiding principles for integrating gender into UNEP activities";

(c) Gender sensitivity checklist; and

(d) Decision 19/7 of the Governing Council, on UNEP and the role of women in environment and development.

7. UNEP submitted to the Division for the Advancement of Women its responses to the questionnaire for the mid-term review of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women on 9 September 1998. The contributions of UNEP were adequately reflected in the report on implementation of that mid-term review. The submission emphasized the need to continue work on gender coordination, through the United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

8. UNEP should strengthen its efforts to ensure that the role of women in environment and development is incorporated in the work of the bodies, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system.

9. Women have a special relationship with their environment. Through the influence of tradition and culture, women, throughout generations, have come to play crucial roles as managers of natural resources in many rural communities. They have developed special skills and acquired valuable knowledge and insights on the environment. A special knowledge of traditional ways of curing ailments based on the use of native plants and herbs is only one of the unique skills available to them.

10. UNEP should support the efforts of Governments and relevant organizations to incorporate the specific role of women in the management and protection of the environment. Specifically, UNEP should catalyse action at the national level to empower women to participate effectively in the process of decision-making on environmental matters.

Annex

GENDER STATISTICS IN THE UNEP SECRETARIAT

I	**Overall situation for all Professional and Project (200 series) posts, including convention secretariats**					
	Total no. of posts (1)	Total no. of encumbered posts (2)	Female staff (3)	% (3/2) (4)	Male staff (5)	% (5/2) (6)
P1-USG	265	222	69	31	153	69
D1-USG	46	39	7	18	32	82
II (A)	**Professional posts in the UNEP secretariat, excluding convention secretariats and project posts**					
	Total no. of posts (1)	Total no. of encumbered posts (2)	Female staff (3)	% (3/2) (4)	Male staff (5)	5/2) % (6)
P1-USG	195	166	55	33	111	67
D1-USG	42	30	6	20	24	80
(B)	**Regular budget (posts subject to geographical distribution)**					
	Total no. of posts (1)	Total no. of encumbered posts (2)	Female staff (3)	% (3/2) (4)	Male staff (5)	% (5/2) (6)
P1-USG	22	18	10	56	8	44
D1-USG	5	5	1	20	4	80
(C)	**Extrabudgetary posts**					
	Total no. of posts (1)	Total no. of encumbered posts (2)	Female staff (3)	% (3/2) (4)	Male staff (5)	% (5/2) (6)
P1-USG	173	148	45	30	103	70
D1-USG	7	25	5	20	20	80
III	**Professional posts in convention secretariats**					
	Total no. of posts (1)	Total no. of encumbered posts (2)	Female staff (3)	% (3/2) (4)	Male staff (5)	% (5/2) (6)
P1-USG	69	55	14	25	41	75
D1-USG	10	10	1	10	9	90